United Nations A/AC.109/2009/17

General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 March 2009

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: challenges and opportunities in the process of decolonization in today's world, to be held in Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, from 12 to 14 May 2009

Guidelines and rules of procedure

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session, adopted resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, in which it declared the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Assembly called upon Member States to redouble their efforts to implement the plan of action contained in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General dated 13 December 1991 (A/46/634/Rev.1), updated where necessary, to serve as the plan of action for the Second International Decade. The updated plan of action is contained in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General dated 22 March 2001 (A/56/61). The plan of action, in paragraph 22 (c), called on the Special Committee to organize seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, as well as at United Nations Headquarters, to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the plan of action.

2. In its resolution 63/110 of 15 December 2008, the General Assembly approved the programme of work of the Special Committee envisaged for 2009, including the holding of a seminar in the Caribbean region to be organized by the Committee and attended by the representatives of all the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

II. Place and dates of the seminar

3. The Caribbean regional seminar will be held in Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, from 12 to 14 May 2009.

III. Purpose of the seminar

4. The purpose of the seminar is to enable the Special Committee to obtain the views of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, experts, members of civil society and other stakeholders in the process of decolonization, that can assist the Special Committee in identifying policy approaches and practical ways that can be pursued in the United Nations decolonization process. The seminar's discussions will assist the Special Committee in making a realistic analysis and evaluation of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on a case-by-case basis, as well as the ways in which the United Nations system and the international community at large could enhance programmes of assistance to the Territories.

5. The contributions of the participants will serve as a basis for further consideration by the Special Committee at its substantive session, to be held in New York in June 2009, with a view to submitting proposals to the General Assembly concerning the fulfilment of the objectives of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

IV. Agenda of the seminar

6. The agenda of the seminar is as follows:

1. Challenges and opportunities in the process of decolonization in today's world:

(a) Dynamics of a changing world;

(b) Strengthening cooperation with administering Powers;

(c) The role of the Special Committee in facilitating enhanced outreach to and participation of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the United Nations decolonization process.

2. Challenges and opportunities in the process of decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean region.

3. Challenges and opportunities in the process of decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific region and other Territories:

(a) Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Pacific region, including a follow-up to the 2008 Pacific Regional seminar;

(b) Other Non-Self-Governing Territories.

4. Role of the United Nations system in providing developmental assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories:

(a) Presentations by the United Nations Development Programme and others;

(b) Perspectives of the Special Committee, administering Powers and territorial Governments, as well as views of experts.

5. Way forward:

(a) Priorities for the remainder of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism;

(b) Possible approach and priorities beyond the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

V. Organization of the seminar

7. The following provisions will govern the organization of the seminar:

(a) The seminar will be organized by the Special Committee in accordance with the rules of procedure contained in the annex to the present guidelines;

(b) The seminar will be conducted by a delegation of the Special Committee consisting of the Chairman and seven other members representing each of the regional groups within the Special Committee;

(c) The seminar may be attended by the following:

(i) Representatives of Member States;

(ii) Representatives of the host Government;

(iii) Representatives of the administering Powers;

(iv) Representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(v) A representative of the Secretary-General;

(vi) Representatives of concerned specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system;

(vii) Representatives of the organizations based in the region and the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(viii) Experts on Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Annex

Rules of procedure

Preamble

The regional seminar is held under the terms of General Assembly resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000. The organization of the seminar and the conduct of its proceedings shall follow the general guidelines set out in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.[a]

Rule 1
Responsibility for conducting the seminar

The seminar shall be organized by the Special Committee and conducted by the Chairman of the Special Committee, with the assistance of the Bureau of the seminar (see rule 2 (a) below).

Rule 2
Officers of the seminar

(a) The Chairman shall appoint two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur of the seminar from among the participating members of the Special Committee. These officers shall be given specific responsibilities by the Chairman and shall constitute the Bureau of the seminar.

(b) The Chairman shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the seminar, direct its discussions, ensure observance of the present rules, accord the right to speak, pose questions and announce decisions.

(c) If the Chairman is unable to be present at a meeting or any part thereof, a Vice-Chairman shall preside over the meeting.

Rule 3
Secretariat

(a) The secretariat of the Special Committee shall service the seminar.

(b) The secretariat shall be responsible for all necessary arrangements regarding the organization of the seminar.

Rule 4
Languages

The working language of the seminar shall be English.

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[a] A/520/Rev.16.

Rule 5
Conduct of business

(a) Decisions shall, as a rule, be taken by consensus. Should a vote be required, only representatives of the Special Committee attending the seminar shall be entitled to vote.

(b) Any procedural question with regard to the conduct of business of the seminar not covered by the present rules shall be decided upon by the Chairman in consultation with the Bureau of the seminar.

Rule 6
Participation in the seminar

Participation in the seminar shall be restricted to the persons to whom formal invitations have been addressed by the Chairman of the Special Committee in accordance with the related decision of the General Assembly[b] and whose names appear on the official list of participants drawn up by the Chairman.

Rule 7
Debates and publicity concerning the seminar

(a) The meetings of the seminar shall be held in public unless the Chairman decides that exceptional circumstances require that a meeting be held in private.

(b) Statements to the information media shall be made by the Chairman. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat shall be responsible for the dissemination of information on the seminar, including the issuance of press releases covering meetings of the seminar held in public.

(c) Participating organizations shall be represented by the person so invited (see rule 6 above), who may make one general statement on issues within the purview of the Committee's mandate and pertaining to those Territories under its consideration during the course of the seminar.

(d) The Chairman may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker.

(e) During the course of the discussion, the Chairman, with the consent of the seminar, may declare the list of speakers closed. When there are no speakers, the Chairman shall, with the consent of the seminar, declare the debate closed.

Rule 8
Records

The seminar shall have sound recordings of its proceedings, which shall be retained in the archives of the United Nations in accordance with established practice.

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[b] See A/56/61, annex, para. 22 (c).

Rule 9
Report

The Rapporteur of the seminar shall prepare the draft report of the proceedings of the seminar. Members of the Special Committee who participate in the seminar will provide conclusions and recommendations to the Special Committee for consideration at its substantive session.

United Nations A/AC.109/2009/18

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 March 2009

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2008 to March 2009

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 63/109, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options of self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and, to that end, requested the Department of Public Information to empower the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions to disseminate materials to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update Web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and requested the Department, and the Department of Political Affairs, to continue their efforts to take measures through all the media available, including publications, radio and television, as well as the Internet, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2008 to March 2009.

2. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information covered decolonization issues extensively through: press releases in both print and online formats; news stories in the official languages in all areas of its news outputs on the United Nations website; radio; and various publications. The coverage focused on the work of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

3. The Department, working closely with the Department of Political Affairs, deployed a Press Officer from the United Nations Information Service of the

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Economic and Social Commission in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok and a national Information Assistant of the United Nations Information Centre in Jakarta to cover the Pacific Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: Priorities for the Remainder of the Decade, organized by the Special Committee in Bandung, Indonesia, from 14 to 16 May 2008.

II. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

4. The Department issued a total of 51 press releases on decolonization, in English and French, during the reporting period, covering meetings, statements and hearings of various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Five press releases were issued on the above-mentioned Pacific regional seminar on decolonization held in Bandung.

5. The topic of decolonization, including the roles of the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee, was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters provided by the Department. The set of maps and text on decolonization, both of which were updated in 2008 to make them more attractive and easier to read, assisted the guides in explaining to the visitors the historical process of decolonization, as well as the locations of the current Non-Self-Governing Territories. The maps were moved to the General Assembly building owing to the change of the tour route associated with the capital master plan. In 2008, more than 300,000 visitors took the guided tour.

6. The Department's Public Inquiries Unit continued to respond to queries from the public concerning decolonization. The Group Programmes Unit arranged briefings for visiting groups on the work of the United Nations, including the role the Organization played in the decolonization process and how decolonization, in turn, impacted its work.

III. United Nations Television and Radio

7. Coverage of issues and activities related to decolonization, including meetings of intergovernmental bodies and the work of United Nations envoys, remained an integral part of the programming produced by the Department's television and radio operations. Among a range of events, United Nations Television covered deliberations of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the General Assembly's consideration of the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and a meeting of the Security Council on Western Sahara. In addition, decolonization issues were featured in the "UN in Action" television series and highlighted in a report distributed by UNifeed.

8. Throughout the period under review, efforts to advance the decolonization process were also the subject of a series of programmes produced by United Nations Radio. In addition to the regular coverage of meetings of intergovernmental bodies,

United Nations Radio aired an interview with the United Nations Envoy to Western Sahara on his visit to Morocco and Algeria in February 2009. As part of United Nations Radio's coverage of issues related to decolonization, the Chinese Unit produced two features on the work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

IV. Internet

9. The Internet has emerged as one of the most useful and effective means of transmitting information on decolonization to end-users, including those who reside in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. One user in Cayman Islands has written to the United Nations: "We saw the above contact information online in the book, 'What the United Nations can do to assist Non-Self-Governing Territories'.... The United Nations Decolonization website is a very useful resource tool to us who live in Non-Self Governing Territories.... The website would also be more useful if you had a subscription option advising whenever new information is posted to the website". The Department plans to discuss ways to enhance the decolonization website with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs.

10. Throughout the reporting period, issues and developments related to decolonization were covered regularly on the United Nations News Centre portal, one of the most heavily visited areas on the United Nations website. Articles by the associated United Nations News Service, featuring United Nations decolonization activities, were distributed as e-mail news alerts, in English and French, to over 54,000 subscribers around the world. Those stories were also picked up by an array of external websites, including popular news aggregators. For example, the story covering the Secretary-General's address to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in February 2009 was carried, among others, by MercoPress, an Uruguay-based news agency covering Mercosur countries, as well as Scoop Independent News, EIN News and Indigenous People's Issues Today.

V. Publications

11. The complete collection of the *Yearbook of the United Nations (1946-2005)*, which is now available on the United Nations website, gives comprehensive coverage to the work of various United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also includes general decolonization issues and the situation of individual Non-Self-Governing Territories.

12. The most popular United Nations reference book, *The United Nations Today* (formerly *Basic Facts about the United Nations*), issued in English, French and Spanish, devotes an entire chapter (chapter 7) to the issue of decolonization, illustrating the historical role of the Organization in the decolonization process, as well as its current efforts in this regard. The publication, *Sixty Ways the United Nations Makes a Difference*, available in all official languages on the Web and as a

downloadable PDF publication, highlights the role of the United Nations in promoting self-determination and independence. In its coverage of the General Assembly, the *UN Chronicle Online* reported on the meetings of the Fourth Committee in 2008, which included its discussion and debate on the subject of decolonization.

VI. United Nations information centres and services

13. During the reporting period, the United Nations Information Service in Geneva issued press releases by human rights experts on the issue of decolonization and produced summaries of meetings where the subject was discussed, in particular in the context of country reviews undertaken by the human rights treaty bodies and during meetings of the Human Rights Council. The topic of decolonization was also addressed during the service's biweekly news briefing. Decolonization and the role of the Trusteeship Council were included in the Service's guided tour of the Palais des Nations, as well as in the information programmes organized by the Service for visiting groups. Approximately 100,000 visitors took the guided tour in 2008.

14. The United Nations Information Service in Vienna disseminated information on decolonization to non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, universities and other educational institutions in Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia, and addressed the issue through the Service's programme of lectures and seminars on the work of the United Nations.

15. The United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels addressed the issue of decolonization in speeches and lectures given by its staff and in response to public inquiries. For example, press releases and news features on Western Sahara were translated into Portuguese and disseminated to Lusophone countries. Reports of the Secretary-General on the subject are regularly shared with requestors, including from the European Union institutions.

16. The United Nations Association of South Africa invited the National Information Officer of the United Nations Information Centre in Pretoria to be a panellist at a model United Nations debate on the "Crisis in Western Sahara" as part of its programme for 2008. The participants, second-year international relations students at the University of Pretoria, took part in this programme as a compulsory activity for their course.